

D.C. State Board of Education Hearing  
Health and Wellness Programs in Schools  
March 16, 2011

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As the instructional coach at Hearst Elem. School, I have had the privilege of among many tasks, serving as a community liaison for the school. The Hearst community has several partnerships that are in support of making our school a healthier place for staff, students and parents. Because the professional development framework in which our teachers are required to work from is limited, the D.C. Healthy Schools Act has enabled us to thread much needed health and wellness programs, initiatives and lesson plans into our instructional day. This local law that supports President Obama's reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act (Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act) and First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* Campaign is a critically important step in opening the door to allow teachers the professional freedom to incorporate health and wellness practices in their classrooms.

According to Section 502 (b) of the D.C. Healthy Schools Act:

“(b) The Environmental Literacy Plan shall, at minimum, describe the following:

“(1) Relevant teaching and learning standards;

“(2) Professional development opportunities for teachers;

“(3) How to measure environmental literacy;

“(4) Governmental and nongovernmental entities that can assist schools;

The following are examples of how Hearst Elem. School is operating as an example of how to step in cadence with this national campaign, stay in compliance with state and federal stipulations and more importantly grow a healthier generation.

- Partnership with 4-H through a gardening club- A 4-H representative from UDC is assigned to our building and assists the teachers with gardening activities to be conducted in the classroom during the science block. The garden lessons are transferred to our outdoor newly established community garden.
- Sidwell Friends Middle School- Our classroom teachers are partnered with the Sidwell Friends 6<sup>th</sup> grade instructional team. Together our teachers and students plan, teach and learn concepts that support our two school's year long study of food security and agriculture sustainability.
- Hearst is the first school to be welcomed into the National Park Trust/ Buddy Bison program – This initiative provides park experiences for students. Healthy

snacks during the park experiences are provided by the *Let's Move* campaign. In addition, Hearst's involvement opened the door for DCPS Office of Out of School Time (OST) to now be Buddy Bison participants.

- Partnership with the Honduran Embassy – Ambassador Hernandez of Honduras has been supportive of our schoolyard garden. Our garden is a microcosm of the food security and microfinance initiatives that have saved many Honduran villages from hunger.
- Citizen Kid Press/ The Good Garden by Katie Smith Milway – The global concept of food security is depicted through the children's book, The Good Garden. Hearst ES and Sidwell Friends MS have been using this book as a backdrop to support our schoolyard garden project.
- Revolution Foods – Hearst is lucky to be one of 7 DCPS to pilot this healthy meals food service. We have taken advantage of the nutrition education opportunities that Rev. Foods offers. Classroom food study, cooking and healthy edible art have all been threaded through lesson studies.
- Let's Move – Hearst is a registered Let's Move Campaign school
- D.C. Farm to School Network – Hearst will participate in the Salad and Strawberries day in June. This is a day to highlight local farm fresh foods for our school lunches.
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation – Hearst is one of 77 D.C. schools to be part of this network. The alliance supports a school-wide action plan to ensure our school's success in staying in compliance with the Healthy Schools Act. Importantly, the alliance provides school-wide initiatives like healthy eating tips of the week, 10 week healthy body challenges and much more.

On behalf of Hearst Elementary School and the Hearst partnership community in support of healthy schools, we invite the D.C. State Board of Education to look to us as a successful model of implementation of the D.C. Healthy Schools Act and use us as a resource as the district moves toward systemic implementation.